1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

• 753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but
(759) often the people take matters in their own hands and by means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 301 789 please. I carry it in muh pocketbook an duh nex day it tun black an I know fuh sho dey wuz tryin tuh cunjuh us."[15]

754 Repeated efforts were made to conjure the newcomers. At first bottles filled with a queer oily substance were buried around the house. When these failed in effect a more powerful charm was compounded, and a few days later the intended victim discovered buried in her back yard what she described as "a bottle neck down in duh groun. It wuz filled wid some kine of funny lookin oil."

754 683 "I know dis wuz a cunjuh," she said. "I call muh huzbun an show it tuh im. He git plenty mad an say he gonuh settle mattuhs once and fuh all wid dis cunjuh man. He wait fuh im by duh lane an wen he come long, he grab im an shake im an tell im he know all bout wut he bin doin. He tell im he bettuh stop tryin tuh cunjuh us, fuh he know bout cunjuh his ownsef an he tell im all duh tings dat he done. Wen duh cunjuh man heah dis, he fall down on is knees an beg muh huzbun tuh fuhgib im. He tell im bout all sawts uh magic dat he wukd on udduh folks in duh neighbuhood. He promise not tuh do no mo uh dis an muh huzbun let im go."

754 753 We were told of another woman who, as a result of conjure,[15] fell mysteriously ill and felt snakes running up and down her left side under the skin.[5, 50] Medical care did not help the case and she is now, according to report, "jis wastin away an no one caahn do nuttn." •

754 789 682 Graveyard dirt is often employed in the making of conjure bags.[8, 9] If possible this must be taken from the grave of a murdered person and some money must be left in exchange. Not very long ago when a man was arrested for murder, his friends, wishing to save him, went to the grave of the murdered man, secured some dirt, and left three pennies on the grave. A man, lingering in the vicinity, stole the money and shortly thereafter spent it in the neighborhood

• *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 store. As one neighbor put it "duh han come widin an inch
789 uh wukin." Although the defendant was not acquitted, he
682 was sentenced to a mere two or three years, and there was some speculation as to whether or not the theft of the money had been what kept him from going entirely free.* [64]

754 A woman, suspecting that someone was attempting to conjure her daughter,[15] dug up the ground around her house until she found the evil charm. Of this case our informant says, "It wuz two balls of graveyahd dut,[9] all wrapped up in a clawt. Dey tuk it roun an show it tuh ebrybody. It wuz up at duh poolruhm all spread out on duh pool table, an folks stop in all duh time tuh xamine it. Duh girl dat wuz
[789] cunjuhed buy a han[6] frum a root man an duh spirits dohn bodduh uh none."**

People in the community believe that extremely powerful charms can be made from the dust from people's foot tracks.[7] There is a constant dread that someone will secure this dust, and zealous care is taken to prevent this. We were told, "A ole uhmun who libed heah-a-bouts wuz so sked dat somebody would fix uh dat she alluz carried a rake wid uh. Down duh road she would go, rakin up uh foot-steps in back of uh, so dat nobody could git dat dus an fix uh." †

• [753] Another resident who neglected these precautions said she became very ill, due to the fact that someone had manufactured a charm from the dust left by her foot tracks. As her condition became more aggravated she at length consulted a
[789] root doctor. He sold her a counter charm[6] and soon the mysterious illness disappeared.‡

761 Death, especially if violent or unexpected, is attributed to
754 witchcraft or conjure.[15] One woman voiced the sentiment of many of the community when she said, "Theah ain't supposed tuh be no sech thing as nachul death yuh in Sandfly.

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ellie Davis, Sandfly.*
‡ *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

I see a man go right down that path theah. I go out tuh see who he wuz an all of a sudden he disappeah. Theah wuzn't no foot tracks aw nuthin. I nevuh see im no mo. I think maybe he wuz gahdin buried treasure.[51]

"Anothuh time I look out in the yahd an theah wuz a hawg jis a eatin up the cawn.[54b] That wuz the biggest hawg I evuh did see. He stand theah an keep eatin an eatin. I run an tell muh huzbun an he drop wut he wuz doin an come runnin. Wen we git theah, the hawg done disappeah. Theah wuzn't no sign of im an the cawn wuz all right theah. It didn't look lak anybody bin eatin on it uhtall.

"Then one time I see a crowd of cows in the field.[54b] Theah wuz a big bull in the middle. They wuz jis a cuttin down the cawn. Theah wuz a big empty space weah they have already eat. I run tuh weah muh brothuh wuz an tell im tuh come quick. We run weah the cows wuz but wen we git theah, they have all vanished. They wuz all gone. Theah wuz no tracks an all the cawn wuz grown back. All of a sudden I feel a terrible pain. I could hahdly git tuh the house. That's the way it is bout the spirits. Ef yuh tell yuh see em an they disappeah an no one else can see em, then it cause yuh tuh git sick."

After a while Liza remembered an incident that had been related to her by her grandfather and she told us, "Muh gran, he see a deah come down the bluff. He run quick an jump on his back. The deah run all aroun the woods. He teah an scratch an try tuh shake muh gran off. He couldn do it. Finally he run intuh the rivuh. Muh gran jump off an make it tuh the sho. He wuz so tired he wuz mos dead."

Was there no protection against the visits of these creatures from the spirit world, we wanted to know. All of the little group assembled on the porch shook their heads and mumbled a reply.

"Yes'm, mos of the folks carry sumpm fuh pruhtection,"[8] said Liza. "These keep othuh folks frum wukin cun-

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

[772] Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it
[789] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

• [753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes
[825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol-
[759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle
775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye
776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

775 "In some places the people told us that dead people's spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered,
775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh
764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the
782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

115 (351) the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

(165) "Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib until he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

(764) "Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not

(783) long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[83]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

(753) "Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn. Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but

829 dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,

789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 69c] He

(587) * *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King related that an old woman showed her some spots on a mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which came back because the mirror was not covered. The water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will cause boils and sores on the legs. 764 (753)

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume. Since there is little in them which differs from Southern Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition. 128 (171) (114)